

# Chiang Ching-Kuo

## A Motive Analysis

# Abstract

After World War Two the final battles of the Chinese civil war were being played out in mainland China. The forces between the upstart Chinese Communist Party and the U.S ally by the name of The Nationalist Party (KMT) clashed in what would ultimately end in a bitter defeat for KMT. In a last ditch effort to avoid total defeat KMT fled to an offshore island by the name of Taiwan and subjugated its population and effectively created a renegade province. For the next 50 years the political and socioeconomic development between China and Taiwan would grow apart considerably. One country would adhere to the teachings of Mao Zedong creating the world's most populous communist country and the other would through different hardships evolve through a brutal authoritarian regime into a stable and healthy democratic country.

Chiang Ching-Kuo was one of the dictators that many consider the one that jumpstarted the democratization reforms in Taiwan. While history may consider him a democratizing dictator there are those that say he only democratized because he had to.. This paper aims to examine his motivations for democratizing. Did he democratize because he believed in the ideals of democracy or did he do it because of internal and external influences he had no control over?

*Keywords:* Taiwan, democratization, China, Chiang

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# 1 Introduction

I have always been fascinated by how Taiwan could in such a short time transform from an authoritarian country into what is today a consolidated democracy. When martial law was lifted in 1987 the first step to democracy was seeded and 38 years of brutal subjugation by the mainlanders on the Taiwanese people ended. Taiwan's rapid democratization has been quite remarkable and the country is today classified as a completely free country by Freedom House. Recent aggressive constitutional and electoral reforms has continued to improve the quality of democracy in Taiwan, in 2006 the country earned a score of 1 in Freedom House's political right and civil liberty categories (Freedom House). Like in many other Asian countries corruption still remains a major problem, recent crackdown on vote-buying and politicians with criminal ties have shown some improvement. According to Transparency International's 2006 Corruption Perception Index, Taiwan was ranked 34 out 163 countries surveyed (Freedom House). While many forces were involved in democratizing Taiwan it is one of very few cases where the ruling party democratized willingly and remained in power legitimately, because of this Taiwan holds a unique place in the field of political science. Like in many other places the struggle for democracy is a complex system involving a great amount of different forces actually clicking together and cooperating, because of this the chance of failure is unsurprisingly high. By studying Taiwan we can hope to understand how and why this country did not go down the same road as so many other authoritarian states. Why it succeeded while so many other countries failed. In the future the fight for democracy lies in the inherent belief that people should have basic human rights to live in peace and prosperity.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Problem

Taiwan is a bit of an anomaly in democratization studies since its remarkably successful transition from authoritarian to democratic rule happened so quickly, usually these transitions do not always work out so well. Obviously Taiwan had its fair share of problems but that does not make their progress any less impressive, especially when comparing them to other authoritarian countries in transition.

Taiwan's democratization came about from several different factors, both minor and major. This difficult process which can be attributed to several different factors did not happen overnight. A rapid modernization of the country coupled with external factors such as United States and China and small groups of elites in positions of power pushed Taiwan towards democracy. Since the forces involved in democratizing Taiwan is long and complex this paper will not attempt to answer that, instead I will be focusing on one specific aspect of Taiwan's democratization, namely Chiang Ching-Kuo and his motivations for lifting martial law and introducing the first fledging steps of democracy to Taiwan. While Chiang Ching-Kuo is generally regarded as a noble person that after years of dictatorship finally jumpstarted the long democratization process Taiwan undertook in the 1980s his motivation for this democratization process can be seen as somewhat ambiguous. In fact there are several clues and factors that may paint him in a different light bearing in mind that outside forces out of his control might have guided him to take the path he ultimately took. He might not after all have been the benevolent dictator that opened the democratization floodgates. In this paper I will delve deeper into Chiang Ching-Kuo's decisions, analyze his motives and find out the intentions behind those decisions. Did he really democratize Taiwan because he was a democratizer at heart or because of outside structural factors and forces that ultimately cornered him in such a way that forced him to open up the political system of Taiwan or lose power?

My research question is therefore formulated as:

- Was Chiang Ching-Kuo's actions based upon his high ideals of democracy or because of outside and inside influences that forced him to democratize?

This paper will also touch upon the actions and decisions made by the other two dictators Taiwan had before and after Chiang Ching-Kuo. Even though both of them made their contributions in varying amounts focus will still lie with

Chiang Ching-Kuo. His actions are the most ambiguous of the three dictators and cannot be easily divided into decisions actively hindering or promoting democracy.

## 2.2 Theories

When a researcher conducts a motive analysis it invariably comes with several difficulties that can be somewhat problematic. How can a researcher know without equivocation what was going on inside the head of the subject? Can he be objective enough not to let his own opinions, experiences and ideals influence the analysis? Since we cannot put ourselves in the shoes of the subject and know for certain what was going on inside his mind it might seem like this paper biting off something too large handle. As this paper is focusing on Chiang Ching-Kuo's actions and motives I am effectively conducting a motive analysis of his actions as a dictator. Motive analyses can be summarized as the attempt to map out the conscious considerations an actor makes before a decision (Esaiasson 2004 s. 317). What is the actor attempting to accomplish with his decision? What are his intentions?

There are sadly several flaws and limitations that come with motive analyses. The main flaw that strikes out the most has to be the fact that it is extremely hard to make the credible claim that one has completely understood the reasons and motive for another person's decisions and actions (Esaiasson 2004 s. 317) Motives are also obviously not something we can directly observe since they are mental thought processes inside a person's head. The closest we can hope to find out about a subject's motives is to from his actions arrive at an educated guess as to what his motives were, but this leaves us with the uncertainty of not really knowing if we are correct (Esaiasson 2004 s. 319). An educated guess is still after all things considered a guess. There are also some specific limitations and problems that arise not only from general motive analyses but also from more specific motive analyses like this paper is attempting to do. At the end it really comes down to how dictators are trying to present themselves. Did the country democratize? Then it dictators will claim that it was all because of their actions and decisions. Did the country try to democratize but fail? Then dictators will instead claim that tried to democratize the country but failed because it was not ready. Because of this we obviously have to be wary of scores of biased literature that may try to present one side of the picture. Independently judging motives and decisions in a motive analyses are especially important takes a precedent to blindly following other people's conclusions.

The fact that motive analysis are hard and riddled with uncertainties means that a researcher in this case have to resign to the fact that methodological shortcuts are required (Esaiasson 2004 s. 317). Assertions drawn from real life

data, in this case the process and considerations involved in the decision-making process, has to be verifiable. The assertions also have to meet certain standards in terms of clearness of data control of outside factors (Hadenius 1983 s. 125). Since methodological shortcuts are almost required in motive analyses these standards will unfortunately be lowered since the analytical tools at disposal are limited at best. In this paper the process of inferring motive and explanations will be collected by means of common sense and analytical reasoning processes. Behavioral sciences are still largely governed by an intuitive thought process instead of the more verifiable systemic science used in areas not associated with motive analyses (Hadenius 1983 s. 126).

According to Hadenius in *The Verification of Motives* there are basically two main ways to infer motives from an actor. The two ways are inference from declarations of motives or inference from completed actions. Both ways have their advantages and limitations. While examining an actor's statements the use of debates, interviews and public speeches can go a long way in identifying the underlining motives and reasons for a decision, especially if the actor has in this way given an explanation for his conduct (Hadenius 1983 s. 126). In the case of identifying underlining and indirect motives and motivations in general statements it gets trickier because what connection is there between the statements and resulting actions? This means that the scientist have to apply his own common sense and present a clear argument for his case explaining the correlation between the general statement and the resulting action. In spite of these uncertainties a motive analysis will always deserve a proper and scientific study. The large uncertainties that comes along with motive analysis does not justify making baseless claims.

Inferences from actions in our daily lives are fairly simple and straightforward. A guy raising his fist is angry, a stern look from a parent signals playtime is over and a person doing a come-hither motion wants us to come over. This straightforwardness does not exist in political science and can many times be downright ambiguous. This is especially true in political science as it so often deals with politicians, and as many people know, politicians can be extremely fickle and ambiguous. Keep in mind that while rational choices and well thought out considerations are important for a politician when making a decision, they are definitely not the main aspects of motive analyses. What should be stressed and emphasized is that as long as the choices made were logical and reasonable for the subject and his goals at the time (Esaiasson 2004 s. 318).

Is it possible to accept the scientific process in this paper? How does the approach of inferring motives from decisions fulfill enough scientific criteria? Well, when attempting a motive analyses I can only say that in this paper the scientific fulfillment lies in how logical the common sense deductions I arrive at are, and how good of an argument I make in their favor.

In this paper I will use these two methods to infer motive:

1. Examine some of Chiang Ching-Kuo's statements, speeches and interviews
2. Examine Chiang Ching-Kuo's actions and decisions.

This paper will effectively span more than a decade of Chiang Ching-Kuo's presidency in Taiwan and the focus will lay on his decisions and interviews.

## 2.3 Materials

The material used in this paper mainly will be drawn from various literature based around Taiwan's democratization in the 1980s. Since some of these books and articles are written by some very well known authors that obviously possess a great deal of expertise in this special democratization subfield of political science it is safe to say that the source and material used are regarded as especially reliable. The norm is to always be critical of the material one is using so that the credibility and truth can be accounted for. Additional sources and materials regarding Taiwan have been collected in forms of articles and papers regarding Taiwan and its democratization process. As some may have noticed a common denominator in these materials is the fact that they tend to deal with the general democratization process of Taiwan and not Chiang Ching-Kuo himself. The reason for this is mainly because of the small amount of literature that deals directly with Chiang Ching-Kuo, but this should not be a problem as he was a key component during Taiwan's democratization and is therefore talked about in great detail even in literatures that deal with the general theories of Taiwan's democratization. I also regard these articles as primary sources, not secondary.

Obviously the entire paper will not be entirely based upon other people's studies and results. This paper is a process where I try to find different motive indicators to act as data that helps me understand Chiang Ching-Kuo and his intentions. In the search of alternative motive indicators interviews are a great tool. Personal interviews are preferred because motives are based on a person's intentions at a given time and can therefore be best explained by the subject himself. In this case Chiang Ching-Kuo has unfortunately been dead for quite some time which makes any proposed interviews rather difficult to implement. Nevertheless, when going through his long presidency his goals and motives will be illuminated by examining the options and different paths of avenues he could have taken.



# 3 Background conditions

## 3.1 KMT's Political Background

Kuomintang (The Nationalistic Party), also known as KMT are many times credited for being the party responsible for bringing down the last emperor of China around the year 1911. While built on the democratic principles of its founder Dr. Sun Yat-sen the party had very little respect for the democratic principles the western world has come to expect, but since this was happening around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century this was not such a big deal. Nevertheless when Dr. Sun Yat-sen founded KMT it was still built on some very progressive views of that era and region. Even if the party was de facto totalitarian it still opposed the ruling order of an almighty emperor and therefore toppled him to make way for a stronger republic that could fight off the ever encroaching colonial powers of the western world on Chinese soil. Sun Yat-Sen built KMT around three principles he had developed, these principles were nationalism, livelihood democracy (Hood 1997 s. 5). The first two principles are very straightforward. Nationalism had to be strengthened in order to create a strong Chinese state that could ward off the western invaders that was plundering the country. After a national unity had been created a livelihood principle in the form of economic progression would be established, only once those two principles were in place could democracy take root on the mainland. It is interesting to speculate on what form of democracy KMT would have allowed if they had not been ousted from mainland China. Sun Yat-Sen believed that KMT would eventually compete in a fair and equal parliamentary playing field, but to reach that stage it would have to remain authoritarian for an indeterminate amount of time (Hood 1997 s. 5). While it is not something this paper intends to find out it is nevertheless interesting to speculate on Sun Yat-Sen's real intentions with KMT's future role in Chinese politics. Like Sun Yat-Sen many non-democratic leaders like to proclaim they are in favor of democracy but cannot implement it because the country is not ready. Sun Yat-Sen's proclamation goes along this same old rhetoric that we have heard of so many times from would-be-democratizing dictators. Something that might shed some light on this question can be found in the decision by Sun Yat-Sen to model his new party after a Leninist top-down organizational structure that allowed the party chairman to enjoy exclusive political power (Copper, 1996 s. 101) (Dickson 1996 s. 44). He felt that well trained and disciplined state apparatus would have a higher chance of implementing his three principles for a strong country, only then would democracy be introduced because premature exposure to democracy would surely fail (Hood 1997 s. 6). We will never know for certain if Sun Yat-Sen really intended to introduce democracy into China but the fact that

he chose a Leninist party structure can be quite telling since the very concept of a Leninist party structure inherently does not work with the concept of democracy. These kinds of party systems and state apparatuses attempts to transform society into something inflexible and rigid. It is not surprising to note that these kinds of transformations often fail, whether it is the society or state apparatus that is rigid and inflexible is not really important. Just like business leaders have to listen to their clients in a constant changing world to adapt to shifting expectations, so does a state's government by listening to various voice outlets like demonstrations, mass media and organizations (Dickson 1996 s. 44). In this case KMT invariably tried to decide and control how people thought about political authority because of their Leninist agenda, something that was quite undemocratic (Hood 1997 s. 6). When Sun Yat-Sen died in 1925 this plan of his would be very much ignored under the new KMT leader Chiang Kai-Shek who did unite China from all the warlords and thereby in a sense completing the one of Sun Yat-Sens principles which encouraged strong nationalism and unity. Chiang Kai-Shek probably did this more out of personal power ambitions than respect for Sun's political tutelage. As a matter of fact very little was paid to Sun Yat-Sen's grand plan, instead China would endure disastrous economic and social policies which ultimately paved the way for the rise of Mao Zhe-Tung's communist party (Hood 1997 s. 5).

When World War Two broke out in the Pacific KMT was at the time embroiled in a costly war with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Japan took this opportunity to invade the country and could hastily take over large areas of land from the Chinese. The continuous infighting meant Japan could unhindered subject the Chinese population to horrible atrocities such as "The Rape of Nanking". Only when Japans war fortune changed and with the help of USA could the Japanese forces be removed from Chinese soil. KMT would not be able to enjoy any newfound respite from battle since now their forces would instead be suffering defeat from the hands of CCP. While reeling from mass defections and internal conflict Chiang Kai-Shek and with 34,382 loyal followers would in a last ditch effort to avoid total defeat, flee to Taiwan where the plan was to reorganize and attempt a retaking of China. This plan was enough for KMT to justify complete subjugation of the original population living on the island before the KMT takeover. Martial law was implemented and KMT suppressed all forms of dissent, many times in brutal ways.

## 3.2 National Identity in Taiwan

To understand the political and social background of Taiwan it is important to understand the ethnic forces at play. The reason for this can be attributed to the fact that a majority of main issues regarding Taiwan and its independence are tied to which ethnic group one a person belongs to. While there are several ethnic groups in Taiwan the two main groups of citizens of Taiwan categorize themselves as are either Taiwanese or Mainland Chinese. This can sometimes lead

to some confusion as the term Mainland Chinese does not refer to people from China but to the KMT refugees that fled to Taiwan in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Wachman 1994 s. 16). The term Taiwanese is applied to Han Chinese that migrated to the island over the previous century before the KMT refugees arrived. The Taiwanese used to speak a language called Taiwanese before KMT took over the island while Mainland Chinese people spoke mandarin which they brought with them from China (Copper, 1996 s. 58). Because of the subjugation of Taiwan by KMT almost all of Taiwan can now speak Mandarin. Both mainlanders and Taiwanese are considered Han Chinese. There are also several small distinct groups that do not fit into this category. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century and forward several smaller groups of people migrated to Taiwan and subsequently settled down and created their own little ethnic communities. While these groups represent only less than 1% of the island population it is important to note that they are not considered Han Chinese. These small ethnic communities are referred to as aborigines and can be compared to the native Indians of North America (Wachman 1994 s. 17). In both cases the natives were living in their respective lands long before the Europeans and the Han Chinese arrived. Right now about 85% of the island population are Taiwanese, 14% Mainland Chinese and 1% aborigines (Wachman, 1994 s. 17).

Both of these labels just mentioned are also applied to any offspring these two groups might have had (Wachman, 1994 s. 16). This complicates matter even further since intermarriages between the groups are common and leads to further confusion. While labeling the two groups might have been meaningful in the 1950s it is now becoming more and more imprecise for each generation. Even though these classifications are vague and inexact it has not hindered the political debate to be framed against the backdrop of these classifications (Wachman, 1994 s. 16).

Different political views between the two ethnic groups have also developed because of the sometimes downright hostile tension between China and Taiwan. The tension stems from the independence issue that arose when Taiwan illegally broke away from China during the civil war. China is in the opinion that Taiwan is a renegade province which is a major problem for Taiwan since it has lead to increased political isolationism in the world community (Ko, 2004 s. 157). Aside from several small African states that Taiwan provides substantial financial aid to in return for political recognition very few countries around the world recognize Taiwan as a legitimate and independent country (Ko, 2004 s. 157). This explains the reason for Taiwan's difficulties in joining organizations such as UN. In spite of these tensions between China and Taiwan many people on the island still identify themselves with China. The reason for this is because it can be said that Chinese or Taiwanese consciousness stems from both political and cultural identities (Hung, 2002 s.568). In Chinese societies elements from both spectrums are closely related, and since a lot of people in Taiwan have ties to China there is a constant tension prevalent in their society. This is explained by the occurrence of people in Taiwan not identifying with the Chinese state and the political sphere but obviously do feel a strong connection to their ancestors homeland and therefore in a cultural aspect (Hung, 2002 s.568). These two forces are clashing

with one another and creating strong feelings around the topic eventual reunification with mainland China and Taiwan's independence from China. This conflict is also further complicated by KMT's subjugation of Taiwan. On a positive note ethnic prejudices and differences have disappeared in recent years. Whereas it was simple to distinguish ethnic differences from certain mannerisms and physical appearance before has now become increasingly harder over the last couple of decades (Copper, 1996 s. 58). Another big factor in creating ethnic boundaries was the language spoken at home. The younger generation's ability to speak both Taiwanese and Mandarin fluently has certainly curbed hostilities and resentment between the two groups (Copper, 1996 s. 58).

KMT were for many years before the 1970s a party exclusively for Mainlanders. Even when Chiang Ching-Kuo later opened up recruitment for Taiwanese party membership a lot of the controlling posts in the party were predominantly held by old conservative Mainlanders (Wachman 1994 s. 17). It is not surprising then that the Mainlander population of the island usually sided with KMT on the reunification issue. All the way up until the 1990s KMT controlled Taiwan in such a way that it was basically a one party state. They were primarily pro-reunification and therefore it was felt as if the entire country pro-unification even though the Taiwanese population did not really want unification with China.

What can be said of the island population's view of the independence issue in general is that Mainland Chinese people on the island are more in favor of reunification with China than the Taiwanese are (Wachman 1994 s. 17). Still the largest groups on the island are not those that favor of either reunification or independence. Recent surveys show that some 60% of Taiwan's population is in favor of a status quo relationship with China (Smith, 2006). This is not really surprising when reunification even in the sense of what happened in Hong Kong (One China two systems) would mean that an unhealthy amount of authoritarianism would be injected into Taiwan's political system. At the same time a declaration of independence could draw the ire of China and result in hostile conflict. Neither of these two opposite options seems to be very attractive to anyone living in Taiwan. A good question to ponder on is how China's constant military threat has influenced people's mind on this issue, it would seem pretty reasonable to expect that those in favor of declaring independence could be much larger without a constant looming military threat.

### 3.3 KMT Establishes a Powerbase

With the arrival of KMT to Taiwan the party had a hard task of organizing and planning a reinvasion of China. While this might seem like an impossible task it was a very real goal in the minds of the entire KMT base at the time. In the minds of KMT retaking China was the ultimate goal to strive for, because of this any means that could be taken to realizing this goal would be justified. This meant that immediately when arriving in Taiwan KMT with the help of their remaining armed forces imposed martial law, effectively criminalizing all forms of dissident

activities. Imprisonments and beatings became a daily form of life and the entire island lived in complete subjugation and terror (Ko, 2004 s. 143). What KMT did might seem extreme but it was definitely not surprising since Chiang Kai-Shek, the leader of KMT, had to give off an aura of power to show that he still was the right man to be leading KMT. This was after all a party built on Leninist teachings. A strong leader was needed if not vital for the party's survival. Decisive actions and drastic actions needed to be taken. Chiang Kai-Shek was a man of action and since he felt that the loss to the communists were attributed to weak organizational structure and initiatives he started a wave of restructuring aimed at building a personal hegemony inside the party (Huang, 1996 s.114). A purging of KMT members he felt were either disloyal or had benefitted too much from the civil war loss was initiated. To combat the passiveness and lack of initiatives that plagued KMT on mainland China he forced old KMT members to retire in favor of younger more driven younger members (Hood 1997 s. 23). Even though Chiang Kai-Shek never really was in any real danger of losing power these drastic measures still served to help him tighten his grip on KMT. While the measures he took only affected local power structure inside KMT Chiang also instituted a series of reforms aimed at creating legitimacy for KMT rule on Taiwan. To do this he needed economic reforms.

The first major economic measure that was the land reform launched in 1949. Not only was it an economic success for the island but it also created a level of support for KMT that it had never before achieved (Hood 1997 s. 23). This would be the first step in Taiwan's remarkable modernization process. A testament to their extremely fast development can be observed in how Taiwan would in the next couple of decades exchange rice field paddies for skyscrapers. The country was one of the worlds poorest in the 1950s, but with economic aid from U.S and education for Taiwanese engineers and economists the country was soon on track for even stronger economic growth (Ko, 2004 s. 144). This aid ended in 1965 but had by then already totaled around \$1.5 billion. 74 percent of Taiwan's infrastructure investment between 1950 and 1965 came from U.S aid (Bullard, 1997 s. 33). Taiwan is quite a remarkable in this case because it is one of two countries in the world that started with an annual per capita income of less than 1000\$ in the 1950s and has an annual per-capita income exceeding 5000\$ by 1990 (Przeworski, 1996 s. 39). From 1953 to 1986 Taiwan's GDP grew from 167\$ to 3,764\$ per capita, by 1993 their GDP was at 10,566\$ per capita (Ko, 2004 s.144). As of 2006 Taiwan's GDP/capita is \$29,600 as opposed to \$32,200 for Sweden (CIA World Factbook). Another factor involved was the KMT changed its policy away from protectionism. Basically, turning the country into one huge manufacturing factory for western countries proved to be a successful move.

## 4 Chiang Ching-Kuo

### 4.1 Chiang Ching-Kuo Assumes Control of KMT

Chiang Kai-Shek's leadership over KMT has always been marked with tight control, effective organizational structure and a perpetuating will for stability. Therefore it should come as no surprise that when Chiang Kai-Shek passed away in 1975 the process of passing over the reins of KMT had been long planned out in advance (Hood, 1997 s.58). Chiang Ching-Kuo had been a loyal follower of his father's his entire life. Even before the escape to Taiwan many of the hardest tasks his father needed to be completed were assigned to Chiang Ching-Kuo (Hsu, 1993 s. 9). This shows that Chiang Kai-shek trusted his son not only in matters of loyalty but also in ability. Chiang Ching-Kuo had after all held several administrative jobs over the years when KMT still controlled China. He was also no stranger to ruling Taiwan. After achieving the status of minister of defense in 1965-1972 he would later move on to becoming the premier in 1972 (Hsu, 1993 s. 13). So when the time came for a succession of power Chiang Ching-Kuo was ready and definitely not a beginner as he had already been supporting his father's rule for decades.

At first many observers in Taiwan waited intently on Chiang Ching-Kuo's first move. Even though he was a familiar face they were interested in discerning any differences in leadership style between father and son. Would Chiang Ching-Kuo continue his father's legacy of strong bullheaded leadership style that they all had grown accustomed to? It seemed like Chiang Ching-Kuo knew that a lot of eyes were rested upon him and waiting for his next move. As a result one of the first decisions he made were to release 3000 political prisoners (Hood 1997 s. 59). He wanted to show that KMT were not afraid of some political dissent, they would even tolerate it. As an isolated decision it showed Chiang Ching-Kuo as someone looking for a new less confrontational beginning, but it did nothing in changing the populations distrust toward KMT. The reason for this is that even though Chiang had released thousands of political prisoners KMT still did not ease up on making arbitrary and harsh arrestments based on political views. Secret agencies inside KMT charged with monitoring colleges, civil society, business and the general public still continued its watch for anything that was critical against KMT. As a result it would seem that policies made to the public showed that even with a new leader KMT had changed very little. Some believed that while the leader had changed the content and substance remained same. This was not entirely true as there were some subtle changes being made inside KMT. This new KMT had changed, Chiang Ching-Kuo's style was of such that he allowed younger party members to express their opinions and concerns, and as long as

they were constructive they did not need to fear any disciplinary reprisals. This new image along with Chiang Ching-Kuo's affection for making public appearances helped ease some of the tension between KMT and the population (Hood, 1997 s. 61). Yet it should not be forgotten that outwardly Chiang Ching-Kuo still carried out many of his father policies. Since taking control of KMT in 1975 Chiang Ching-Kuo did not do anything really do anything that could be concretely constitute as easing up the authoritarian system against the island population. Martial law was not removed until 1986 and by then it had been in effect for close to four decades, a good 12 years of those under Chiang Ching-Kuo's reign. Even if his lack of democratization policies outwards toward the population might warrant certain criticisms one cannot look pass the key decisions he took in radically changing KMT. In these two next segments I will highlight some of the key decisions Chiang Kai-Shek took that was crucial in pushing Taiwan towards democratization and his motivations and reasons for taking those decisions. The first part will be a rundown of specific key decisions he took that ultimately benefited the democratization process. The second part will be an analysis of some of the more general domestic and international aspects that could have influenced his motives.

## 4.2 Key Decisions for Democracy

*Chiang Ching-Shek opened up the political leadership of KMT to Taiwanese born party members.*

Even though transfer of power had been planned for some time Chiang Ching-Kuo as a premier still needed three years to assume his father's old position as president. The reason for this was that the conservative hardliner faction of KMT did not necessarily see him as someone they owed any loyalty to, or as someone that could be beneficial for their goals (Ko, 2004 s. 153). To find support Chiang Ching-Kuo appealed to new Taiwanese recruits that were becoming increasingly frequent among KMT recruits. In the 1970s 74% of all new KMT recruits were Taiwanese yet their representation in KMT's highest ruling organ (Central Committee) would only be 14.6% (Huang, 1996 s. 117). To satisfy the Taiwanese members Chiang Ching-Kuo opened up KMT leadership which up until this point was by far dominated by the mainland Chinese faction. A negative point can be made that a majority of the new Taiwanese members on the central committee were far from democratically elected. Chiang Ching-Kuo reshuffled the Central Committee several times. First he selected those that would help him with his power transition only to have them replaced several years later (Hood, 1997 s. 68). Many times those that were replaced were not seen as progressive enough. Newer leaders were always in demand to cope with the increased political activity each democratic reform caused (Hood, 1997 s. 68). Even though his early reshuffling of the central committee seemed to be just a convenient way to consolidate power it would seem that Chiang Ching-Kuo's later central committee reshuffling was an attempt to make way for progressive reformers more in tune with the democratization process. At the time of his death in 1988 Chiang Ching-Kuo's Taiwanization policy had increased Taiwanese-born members in the Central Committee to 34% (Huang, 1996 s. 117).

The result of Chiang Ching-Kuo's decision to open up the leadership cannot just be measured in terms of statistics and numbers. With such a large majority of new recruits coming from the subjugated population would mean that demands from their side would sooner or later spring up. Chiang Ching-Kuo also understood that without their support he would also be much more limited in terms of power. In this case both groups emerged out of the arrangement as mutual beneficiaries.

*In 1982 Chiang Ching-Kuo appoints a Taiwanese to the post of vice president.*



As the president of Taiwan and leader of KMT Chiang Ching-Kuo's power was no doubt substantial, but like all parties around the world opposing views and different opinions always exist. In this case the source of dissent would come from the old guard who many times did not share some of the liberal views held by newer KMT recruits and the Taiwanese population (Ko, 2004 s. 153). These were conservatives that had suffered through the bitter loss of China to the communists and were reluctant to see the waning power slip away even further. Their dwindling power was obviously a concern for them and would be combated by a continuation of the harsh subjugation tactics employed by KMT. Any political liberalization that would increase Taiwanese political influence would decrease theirs. When Chiang Ching-Kuo regardless of their concerns went ahead and selected a Taiwanese born as his vice president it was quite evident that he had drawn the ire of the conservatives once again (Ko, 2004 s. 153). Chiang Ching-Kuo died in 1988 and the fallout of his designation would eventually result in KMT splitting into two different coalitions actively working for different agendas. The mainstream coalition rallied around the vice-president Lee Teng-Hui and would stand for the continuing Taiwanization and democratization of KMT. The non-mainstream coalition comprising mainly of conservatives and the military would instead stand for the continuation of authoritative rule and eventual reunification with China (Ko, 2004 s. 156).

Chiang Ching-Kuo's pick would turn out to play a substantial role in Taiwan's democratization process. Lee Teng-Hui would later go on and implement several constitutional reforms aimed at improving democracy (Ko, 2004 s. 157). In 1996 he called for Taiwan's first and fair presidential election, which he also won.

*Chiang Ching-Kuo tolerates the illegal formation of the opposition party DPP and terminates martial law.*

During the 1960s a loose political affiliation by the name of Tang-Wai started training and educating political leaders to run as independents in small local elections. The name can be roughly translated into "outside the party" and was aptly signified their resentment of the one party rule in effect. While group was not a true political party since it lacked some key ingredients such as clear organizational structure, cohesiveness and common goal it nevertheless was the closest thing to an organized opposition party KMT could have (Copper, 1996 s.102). Their goals was to liberalize the political sphere of Taiwan so that free and fair popular elections could be held, the inclusion of free press, speech and assembly, the formation of new political parties, and the removal of martial law (Copper, 1996 s.102).

Sadly the Tang-Wai suffered from internal fighting, disputes over petty differences, unreasonable and radical demands and therefore did not do well in the small local elections that KMT were allowing. While these local elections did not provide any real effect on KMT policy it did serve to train future opposition leaders in political life and at the same time act as a conduit for the aggregation of political views and socialization (Ko, 2004 s. 176).

Both KMT and Tang-Wai would come to blows in 1986 when Tang-Wai formed the opposition party DPP. At the time the temporary provisions law (martial effect) from 1948 was still in effect. The law effectively outlawed the formation of opposition parties and therefore the formation of DPP was illegal. Even though that same year Chiang Ching-Kuo had put together a committee to oversee the possibility of terminating martial law and the permittance of opposition parties this move could be seen as a defiance cry from the opposition (Huang, 1996 s.112). They were testing the waters and pushing the envelope around KMT control. In spite of this Chiang Ching-Kuo chose to ignore KMT conservatives and their calls for action against DPP. The last time anyone tried to form an opposition party was in the 1960s and it ended with Chiang Kai-Shek imprisoning opposition leader for ten years (Huang, 1996 s. 117). Fortunately for DPP Chiang Ching-Kuo did not run Taiwan the same way his father did. What he did though was not only surprising but also very interesting. Domestically Chiang Ching-Kuo ignored both sides and instead in an interview with Katherine Graham of the Washington Post announced that he would allow the formation of DPP and that martial law would be removed the next year (Ko, 2004 s. 153). From then on the ban on political parties would be lifted, media control was lessened, and large scale demonstrations would be tolerated. Now Taiwan would only be five years away from its first national assembly election and ten years from their first fair presidential election where the Taiwanese population did not choose to vote KMT out of power.

## 4.3 General Motivations for Democratization

What reasons could have influenced Chiang Ching-Kuo to go against the wishes of KMT conservative and act in such a liberalizing manner? The reasons are mainly centered on a couple of international factors that vary in degrees of importance. These factors can further be divided into categories such as China and the U.S as their influence on Taiwanese foreign policy and development were substantial. There is a possibility that his motivations might also have been influenced by the need to reinvigorate the party and his deteriorating health.

### 4.3.1 U.S Factor

During the early years of KMT applied a substantial amount of energy to preserve friendly ties with U.S as it was heavily depended upon economic aid for its investment, modernization process and military aid in warding off Chinese aggression. In the 1950s these friendly ties were relatively easy to maintain as KMT had been an ally throughout World War Two and had now evolved into a key component in the U.S strategy of containing and suppressing communism (Ko, 2004 s. 144). Interestingly enough during this time the U.S was quite aware of the authoritarian indiscretions KMT were carrying out against the Taiwanese

population yet did nothing about it. One of the reasons for this can be explained by the rose colored glasses the U.S wore when looking at Taiwan. The U.S needed an alternative to communist China and was not afraid to look the other way whenever KMT were implementing their authoritarian policies (Ko, 2004 s.170). The fact that the communist scare and the McCarthyism in the 1950s was considerable and any diplomatic ties with communist China was undesirable certainly also had a positive effect on Taiwan's image in the U.S (Copper, 1996 s. 160). Chiang Ching-Kuo was aware of the diplomatic challenge he was facing and in spite of relations between U.S and China deteriorating during the Vietnam War the lack of diplomatic ties between two of the largest countries in the world was unsustainable. It was therefore in Taiwan's best interest to convince U.S foreign policy makers that Taiwan still held a strategic importance. This obviously failed since the 1969 Nixon doctrine convinced U.S policy makers that getting out of Vietnam and avoiding another land war in Asia was of the outmost concern (Copper, 1996 s.161). One of the means to accomplishing this was to establish friendly relations with the increasingly powerful country of China (Copper, 1996 s.161). President Nixon saw a perfect opportunity to improve foreign relations with a future world power and major international force in his historic visit to China in 1972 (Ko, 2004 s. 173). A couple of years later the inevitable happened and U.S severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan and established official diplomatic ties with China. Chiang Ching-Kuo could only stand by and watch as Taiwan suffered the shock of enduring the diplomatic abandonment that the U.S had just put them through. During this time period Chiang Ching-Kuo had to have been influenced by the turn of events that had happened. Instead of the continuing support and military protection that Taiwan had enjoyed for over 30 years they were now faced with an international crisis of unprecedented nature. One by one countries around the world dropped diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favor of China. This diplomatic crisis coupled with the precarious situation in regards to China spilled over into the economic market making foreign investments and business, both foreign and abroad, suffer. Therefore Chiang Ching-Kuo had at the time plenty of incentives to keep friendly ties with U.S and the international community. It is now clear that Taiwan survived this diplomatic trauma by adapting its domestic practices and governmental policies to appease the U.S.

What is important to note is that the wave of derecognition Taiwan suffered in the 1970s was a conscious move by other countries to recognize China. This decision might have been surprising today since Taiwan is a democratic country whereas China is not. Unfortunately Taiwan was in no position to make this argument back in the 1970s. For Chiang Ching-Kuo the message was clear. Since Taiwan was in dire need of international recognition and backing to ward off an aggressive China changes had to be made. Only by seizing the moral high-ground of democratic legitimacy against China could Taiwan attempt gain international support (Ko, 2004 s. 137). This argument is illustrated in the quote Chiang Ching-Kuo gave Katherine Grahame during his interview with the Washington Post (Nathan - Ho, 1993 s. 38-39):

“Especially today when the communist bandit regime is near the end of the road, with its vile reputation known to everyone [...] it is more important than ever for us to strengthen the construction of constitutional government to demonstrate clearly that the strong contrast between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait is basically due to the fact that one side has implemented a constitution based on the Three People’s Principles while the other has not[...].”

In that interview with Katherine Grahame Chiang-Kuo shows us indirectly that he placed great importance on international support and recognition by the way he announced the removal of martial law. Chiang Ching-Kuo made his announcement during an interview session with an American newspaper and not through the Taiwanese media. This is significant because Chiang Ching-Kuo felt that the knowledge of martial law ending was a piece of information more important to the U.S than it was to those living under it. Yet the main point stands. In order to gain international support Taiwan would have to contrast and differ themselves when being compared to China. If China chose the authoritarian route what other possible option did Taiwan and Chiang Ching-Kuo have? Therefore they democratized in order to gain legitimacy.

#### 4.3.2 China Factor

Diplomatic ties between Taiwan and China have always been poor and could many times be conceived as downright hostile. It can be said that this hostile relationship has influenced Taiwan and their democratic development. Let’s consider the diplomatic state between the two countries. On one side we have China that considers Taiwan a renegade province that should be one day be reincorporated into their country, forcefully if the need arises. On the other side there is Taiwan who considers themselves a democratic country with over 50 years of independent autonomy and rule. China sees any move Taiwan makes toward further independence as something undesirable and as a sign of aggression. This has often lead towards the use of China’s superior military and navy implementing intimidation tactics such as shooting missiles right over Taiwan during the presidential elections of 1996 (Fulghum, 1996 s. 23). In this instance the scare tactics backfired since the U.S responded by sending two aircraft carriers through the Taiwan Strait as a signal to China. The voters responded to the missile shootings by not getting intimidated and getting a 74% voter turnout (Ko, 2004 s. 161). Taiwan has not ever resorted to the scare tactics that China sometimes employs because as a much smaller country they obviously lack the military capabilities. Nevertheless this does not mean that their rhetoric have never carried hostile vibes and intentions. The reason for this was in spite of what many would view as common sense and reason Taiwan for many decades believed they would someday reunite with China. In the first couple of years after fleeing to Taiwan their stated policy was to return to Mainland China, counterattack and destroy the communist regime (Copper, 1996 s. 164). This outspoken policy of liberating China which must have been based on long-term

plans considering the military and political capability available to Taiwan gradually shifted into a political plan (Copper, 1996 s. 164). If Taiwan could not retake China with military means it would try to do so with political means, and if that meant Taiwan had to democratize then that would be a price Taiwanese leaders and especially Chiang Ching-Kuo would pay. His interview with Katherine Harris Chiang Ching-Kuo seems to support this statement. In the interview Chiang Ching-Kuo revealed that his democratization reforms are being carried so that those living in China would want to emulate Taiwan's political system (Nathan – Ho, 1993 s. 39):

“Abolishing the emergency decrees is for the purpose of speeding up democratic reforms here. We must serve as a beacon of light for the hopes of one billion Chinese so they will want to emulate our political system”.

Chiang Ching-Kuo's next three statements seem to indicate two things. Recovering mainland China could be achieved mainly through political means, and that the act of retaking China and holding it would depend on the backing and support provided by the general population of China. To achieve this level of support democracy would need to be flourishing in Taiwan. (Nathan – Ho, 1993 s. 39):

”The late President Chiang used to say that recovering mainland the depended on 70% political, 30% military [...]”

“We are going to use our achievements in building a democratic and free society on Taiwan based on the Three Principles of the People, to exert a strong political influence on the Chinese people on the mainland [...] So long as our actions receive the warm support of the mainland compatriots, they won't lead to a world war.”

”The achievement of prosperity on Taiwan under the Three People's Principles has established a good model for the future construction of a free, peaceful, strong, and unified modern China.

Let's reiterate the main points derived from Chiang Ching-Kuo's statements. While Taiwan's made no secret of their policy regarding the retaking of China the plan around this policy changed. Attempting an invasion of China through military might would be impossible which meant that Taiwanese policy around this issue changed accordingly. Both Chiang Kai-Shek and Chiang Ching-Kuo in their later years seemed to be resigned to the fact that if any move towards retaking China would be made. It would have to be through political means and with the help and support of the general population living on the mainland. Through these points an argument can therefore be made that the so called China factor influenced Chiang Ching-Kuo in such a way that he had a reason and a motivation for pushing towards democratic reform. His wish for an eventual retaking of mainland China through political means meant that he hoped China's

population would want a freer political system that hopefully Taiwan could provide. To do this he had to implement democratic reforms.

### 4.3.3 Party Revitalization

Over the course of the decades KMT ruled Taiwan it has several times been subjected to a number of embarrassing scandals. Even though domestically these scandals could never amount to something that could threaten their stranglehold of Taiwan it would over the years be a source of embarrassment for KMT, especially considering the fact they were trying to establish democratic legitimacy. One significant scandal was the assassination of Henry Liu in 1984 by Taiwanese security personnel. The fact that Henry Liu was a noted journalist and critic of the KMT regime was not what subsequently angered U.S. It was because the assassination had taken place on U.S soil and against a U.S citizen (Hook, 1993 s. 167). Chiang Ching-Kuo's son was also actually thought to have been behind the whole sordid murder affair but this accusation was never proven (Nathan – Ho, 1993 s. 45). This along with a couple of other mysterious death of notable Taiwanese public figures caused the U.S to publically criticize Taiwan who had up until this point escaped much of the criticisms it deserved for several decades (Ko, 2004 s. 145). These scandals along with the Kaohsiung incident of 1979 where KMT forces actively rounded up and jailed peaceful demonstrators and local politicians served warnings that KMT needed a reinvigorating boost. It would seem as if those recent events had somehow generated an aura of doom throughout the KMT party, but at the time it was unclear if Chiang Ching-Kuo shared this negative feeling (Nathan – Ho, 1993 s. 45). Nevertheless it is possible that some of these setbacks could have sparked Chiang Ching-Kuo try to reinvigorate the KMT party and one way to do this would be to continue the push toward the aggressive reforms he was instituting (Nathan – Ho, 1993 s. 45).

### 4.3.4 Ailing Health

Another possible motive for Chiang Ching-Kuo's reforms can be found in his ailing health. As a long time sufferer of diabetes Chiang Ching- Kuo would endure several complications caused by his sickness. In 1981 and 1985 Chiang Ching-Kuo would go through two surgeries to fix two eye complications caused by his diabetes. In 1985 he also had a pacemaker installed to help his weak heart. It is not unreasonable to imagine that these complications caused by his poor health must have in some ways affected him, especially if we are to assume that democratizing Taiwan was a main concern of his. Not only would his death cause some kind of political turmoil, especially if a clear successor had not been chosen but it would also mean the loss of a capable and relatively popular political leader. Chiang probably also realized that it would be much harder for a successor to outmaneuver conservative KMT forces and implement democratic reforms than if he did it himself. If his reforms would have a good chance of success then time

would be of the essence, especially if he at the time considered the condition of his health (Nathan – Ho, 1993 s. 45). While there is no direct evidence to support these claims Chiang Ching-Kuo's reforms and actions during his final years in office seemed to be laden with some kind of uncharacteristic urgency that had been absent before his deteriorating health started becoming an issue (Nathan – Ho, 1993 s. 49). Chiang Ching-Kuo's deteriorating health probably also affected the actions of the opposition forces. Even though Chiang Ching-Kuo worked towards the removal of martial law he was still an opponent of the opposition forces because of the current ban on opposition parties. Yet it cannot be denied that opposition forces still saw him as a reformer working against conservative KMT forces and if Chiang Ching-Kuo would die prematurely without a clear successor the chances of a conservative KMT leader taking control of KMT could be disastrous (Nathan – Ho, 1993 s. 49). Before the formation of DPP opposition forces in Taiwan did think that getting an organized party going during the Chiang Ching-Kuo's tenure as president would be preferable since only then could political arrests and bloodshed be avoided (Nathan – Ho, 1993 s. 49). It could be difficult to predict the attitudes of a post authoritarian Chiang Ching-Kuo era government against Taiwanese opposition forces. Luckily history would play out differently and Chiang Ching-Kuo did get enough reforms implemented and in time also selected a Taiwanese vice president with a clear pro-reform agenda.

## 5 Conclusion

This paper has identified a number of direct decisions Chiang Ching-Kuo made in favor of democratization while at the same time attempting to identify the possible reasons and motivations for those decisions. No one can deny the fact that Chiang Ching-Kuo was a dictator who instituted a number of reforms. The question is what possible reasons did he have? Apart from a number of economic reforms there were three decisions he made that forever changed the makeup of KMT.

- Opened up the political leadership of KMT to Taiwanese born members
- Selects the Taiwanese born Lee Teng-Hui who would later go on and commence a number of constitutional reforms aimed at making the country even more democratic.
- Removes martial law and acts with restraint against the illegal formation of DPP even when many KMT members were calling hostile action.

None of the decisions above can be said to have been easy for Chiang Ching-Kuo to make. Neither are they decisions to be taken lightly. They were crucial in the democratic process Taiwan went through. An interesting question consider would be if Chiang Ching-Kuo would have opened up the party leadership posts even if he did not need the Taiwanese member's support in order to stand against the old conservative KMT guard? What about his decision to select a Taiwanese born person as his vice president and therefore drawing again drawing the ire of the conservative faction within KMT? This time there was no hidden agenda for Chiang Ching-Kuo, this time he did not need any added support to gain control of KMT. It seems like he chose a man that was best suited to lead Taiwan in the future considering the precarious international situation Taiwan currently was in. The fact that Chiang Ching-Kuo had no qualms or any notions of discrimination against Taiwanese born people shows that he knew that in order for Taiwan to evolve mainland Chinese and Taiwanese people would have to be able to put aside their differences and work together. His decision to remove martial law can be said to have been motivated by a desire to please the U.S considering the fact that the announcement concerning this decision was revealed in a U.S newspaper to U.S media.

In this paper I divided his motivations into three parts. One part deals with U.S and international influence, another part deals with Chinese influence and lastly there is a part that examines if his deteriorating health the need to reinvigorate the party, all of which could have played a part in his motivations. All three played a big role in influencing Chiang Ching-Kuo in his decisions to reform because he knew that in order to gain legitimacy and protection against China he would need



U.S and international support and therefore he needed to democratize Taiwan. China's influence on Chiang Ching-Kuo's decision were much more negative in character but nonetheless equally important. It is known that Chiang Ching-Kuo along with many other mainland Chinese within KMT were still keen on reinvading China or at the very least enter into some sort of reunification process with a China not ruled by the communists. In order to do this the people of China had to look up to what KMT had done with Taiwan. The population of China would have to admire KMT and their leadership style. To achieve this KMT would have to become democratic with all intents and purposes.

There is an important question that still needs to be answered. Was Chiang Ching-Kuo's actions based upon his high ideals of democracy or because of outside and inside influences that forced him to democratize? In light of the observations made regarding domestic and especially international influences, and at the same time taking into account some of the statements he made it is reasonable to conclude that his democratization reforms were made out of necessity and not because of any rosy ideals of democracy. The political status at the time pretty much narrowed Chiang Ching-Kuo's possible options down to just a few feasible actions. This does definitely not mean that Chiang Ching-Kuo was a brutal dictator. He should not be compared to other dictators in undemocratic third world countries that refuse to relinquish power and usually fights to the bitter end at the expense and suffering of the general population. Inherently there had to have been a will or sympathetic sentiment from his side towards the ideals of democracy. It should still be stressed that his motivations for starting the democratization process lies mainly in outside political pressure from the international community, the U.S and China.

Chiang Ching-Kuo undoubtedly had a significant effect on Taiwan's democratization process. If there had been someone less sympathetic to democracy and its ideals Taiwan's history could instead have turned out very differently. Thanks to Chiang Ching-Kuo's softer stance and progressive reforms Taiwan can now consider itself unique as it is one of very few countries in the world where the subjugated population in its first free elections in 1996 actually chose to keep its former authoritarian rulers in power when they elected Lee Teng-Hui as president. Many non-democratic around the world wishing to modernize and democratize could benefit from studying Taiwan.

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